

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Section 6	Environmental Information .....	6.12-1
6.12	Socioeconomic Resources .....	6.12-1
6.12.1	Affected Environment.....	6.12-1
6.12.2	Environmental Consequences.....	6.12-17
6.12.3	Environmental Justice.....	6.12-23
6.12.4	Cumulative Impacts .....	6.12-26
6.12.5	Mitigation Measures .....	6.12-26
6.12.6	Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards.....	6.12-26
6.12.7	Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts .....	6.12-27
6.12.8	Permits Required and Permit Schedule.....	6.12-28
6.12.9	References.....	6.12-28

## List of Table

Table 6.12-1	Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in Imperial County
Table 6.12-2	Ten Leading Commodities in Imperial County, 2003
Table 6.12-3	Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in San Diego County
Table 6.12-4	Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in Riverside County
Table 6.12-5	Population Trends and Projections
Table 6.12-6	Housing, January 2005
Table 6.12-7	Housing Values, 2000
Table 6.12-8	2004-2005 Adopted Budget Appropriations and Expenditures
Table 6.12-9	2004-2005 Adopted Budget General Fund
Table 6.12-10	Construction Employment
Table 6.12-11	Race and Poverty Data
Table 6.12-12	Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts

## List of Figures

Figure 6.12-1	Minority Populations and Persons Living Below Poverty within the Six-Mile Radius of the Project
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## **6.12 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES**

This section describes the socioeconomic setting of the area potentially affected by the Project and includes a discussion of the potential socioeconomic impacts resulting from Project construction and operation. LORS and agency contacts relevant to socioeconomics, proposed mitigation measures, and a discussion of permits required for the Project are also discussed in this section.

Socioeconomic issues relevant to the evaluation of environmental impacts include labor force, employment, and income; population and housing; public finance and fiscal issues; schools; and public services, and utilities (including fire protection, emergency response services, law enforcement, schools, medical services, and utilities).

The Project Site is located in the northwest unincorporated area of Imperial County, a county with low population and employment density.

### **6.12.1 Affected Environment**

The Project Site is located on the southwest quadrant of IID Property adjacent to the existing Niland Substation. The Property is north of Beal Road, and approximately one-half mile northeast of the Town of Niland, in the northwest unincorporated area of Imperial County. After Niland, the next closest city to the Project Site is Calipatria, approximately 10 miles south of the Project Site. This portion of Imperial County is primarily used for agriculture and geothermal power production, although 75 percent of the county area is desert or mountains (ICCED 2003).

This section describes existing economic and demographic conditions at varying geographic levels. Information is first presented for Imperial County, including the immediate Project vicinity, the nearby Town of Niland, and the city of El Centro. Next, information is presented for San Diego County and Riverside County because construction labor needs associated with the Project would be met by labor forces from both counties, west and north of Imperial County, respectively. Construction projects tend to attract workers from up to a 2-hour commute distance, and portions of San Diego and Riverside counties are within the 2-hour commute distance to the Project Site.

#### **6.12.1.1 Economy: Labor Force, Employment, and Income**

##### ***Imperial County***

The Project Site is located in northwest Imperial County, east of the Salton Sea. Imperial County contains 4,597 square miles of land (2.7 percent of California land) (ICCED 2003; Census 2005a) and borders Mexico on the south, Riverside County to the north, San Diego County on the west, and the state of Arizona on the east. The Colorado River forms the eastern boundary of Imperial County, as well as the Arizona-California border. The major east-west transportation route is Interstate 8, beginning in San Diego and continuing east to Arizona. State routes 78, 86, and 111 also travel through Imperial County. The Project Site is located one-half mile east of the Town of Niland, approximately 30 miles north of the city of El Centro, and approximately 120 miles northeast of the city of San Diego.

Labor Force

In 2004, the number of Imperial County labor force participants (59,900) had increased by 1.7 percent per year since 1990. The unemployment rate in Imperial County was approximately 17 percent in 2004, 0.4 percentage points lower than the 2000 rate, and 8.5 percentage lower than the 1990 rate. Despite these decreases, unemployment remains high in Imperial County compared to other areas in California. The state of California 2004 unemployment rate of 6.2 percent is less than half the Imperial County rate (EDD 2005a). Throughout 2004, unemployment rates ranged from 14.4 percent in February to 20.7 percent in July. This difference is likely attributable to the seasonal employment fluctuations typical of the agricultural industry. The variability in employment levels results in a labor surplus during certain times of the year. However, apart from the influence of the agricultural industry, the unemployment rate in Imperial County is still substantially higher than in California as a whole and in the neighboring counties of Riverside (5.8 percent) and San Diego (4.7 percent).

Industry Employment

Although the share of county employment that is farming employment decreased substantially during the 1990s, by 9 percentage points (Table 6.12-1, Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in Imperial County) (EDD 2005a), the predominant industry in Imperial County remains agriculture (IPD 2005). Other important industries are government (which was the fastest-growing industry in terms of employment in the 1990s), geothermal electric power plants, state prisons, retail trade, and services (IPD 2005).

**TABLE 6.12-1**  
**LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND**  
**INDUSTRY IN IMPERIAL COUNTY**

Measure	1990	2000	2004
Civilian labor force	47,400	56,100	59,900
Employment	35,300	46,300	49,700
Civilian unemployment rate	25.6%	17.5%	17.1%
<b>Percent of employment, by industry</b>			
Farming	33%	24%	20%
Natural resources, mining and construction	5%	4%	3%
Manufacturing	4%	3%	5%
Trade, transportation and utilities	18%	19%	20%
Information	1%	1%	1%
Financial activities	3%	3%	3%
Professional and business services	4%	4%	4%
Educational and health services	4%	4%	5%
Leisure and hospitality	6%	6%	6%
Other services	2%	2%	2%
Federal government	2%	4%	4%
State government	<sup>1</sup>	5%	5%
Local government	19% <sup>1</sup>	22%	23%

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>This percentage estimate is local and state government, together. In 1990, the two estimates were grouped together.

Source: EDD 2005a.

Imperial County industries with the highest employment in 2004 were local government; farming; and trade, transportation and utilities. Construction employment in Imperial County in 2004 was grouped in the category of natural resources, mining, and construction, a category with approximately 1,700 employees that year (Table 6.12-1; EDD 2005a).

### Income

In 2003, wage and salary disbursements in Imperial County were \$1.6 billion, which represents 0.2 percent of state wage and salary disbursements that year. The average wages per job were \$27,455, which was 33 percent lower than the same measure for the state (BEA 2005).

Total personal income in 2003 was approximately \$3.1 billion in Imperial County. Per capita income in 2003 was \$20,674 in Imperial County, approximately 38 percent lower than the same measure for the state and ranking in the bottom ten when compared to the other 57 California counties (BEA 2005). The median household income in Imperial County in 1999 of \$31,870 is 32 percent lower than the same measure for California. Imperial County's population is poor when compared to some other California counties (ICCED 2003). Imperial County has several colonias<sup>1</sup> within 150 miles of the Mexican border, which are home to very low-income families and individuals (USDA 2005).

### Future Employment and Projects

Between 2001 and 2008, employment in Imperial County is expected to grow by approximately 15 percent, for an average annual rate of growth of 2.0 percent. Industries anticipated to grow the most over this period are manufacturing (6.2 percent per year) and construction and mining (4.0 percent per year). Construction and mining employment is anticipated to grow by 31.3 percent over the 7-year period 2001 to 2008 (EDD 2005b). The city of Mexicali, Mexico, is located immediately adjacent to the Imperial County border and has a population of approximately 1 million people. Many cultural facilities and international businesses exist in Mexicali, including maquiladora assembly or manufacturing operations.<sup>2</sup> NAFTA is expected to benefit Imperial County in the long run<sup>3</sup> (IPD 2005).

### Business Activity

Over 2,200 business establishments existed in Imperial County in 1999. Approximately 39 percent of these were service establishments, and 31 percent were trade establishments. Eighty-seven percent of businesses had fewer than 20 employees, 97 percent had fewer than 50 employees, and all but seven businesses had less than 250 employees (DOF 2005a). During high farming season, Imperial County becomes more active, and businesses experience higher

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<sup>1</sup>Colonias are communities that lack basic services such as adequate roads, electricity, and water and sewer systems (USDA 2005).

<sup>2</sup>A maquiladora assembly or manufacturing operation can be partly or entirely owned and managed by non-Mexicans, and uses competitively-priced Mexican labor to assemble, process or otherwise perform manufacturing operations. Mexican law allows these operations to bring in most capital equipment and machinery from abroad (ITDS 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, maquiladoras have increased their exports, production value, and workforces. Approximately 4,760 maquiladoras currently exist, most located around the Mexican border (ITDS 2005).

revenues due to the influx of farm workers and related demands for services, food, and temporary lodging.

El Centro is the largest city in Imperial County, as well as the county seat. The city of El Centro covers approximately 10 square miles. In the 1940s, the El Centro economy was based on agriculture, specifically fruit and vegetable packing and shipping; ice plants; a flax fiber plant; box factories; and concrete pipe and brickyards. In the 1980s, the government and trade industries became the two largest employment sectors, although agriculture still played a part (EC 2005). Currently, over 35 growers and shippers still operate in El Centro. The largest employers in El Centro are the Centinela State Prison, Imperial County, the Imperial Irrigation District, and the Naval Air Facility (ECCC 2005).

The geothermal power industry in Imperial County employs over 285 people, most of whom are county residents, and results in over \$12 million in tax revenue for local government, schools, and special districts. Cal Energy, which is the largest of all geothermal companies in Imperial County, is the largest taxpayer in Imperial County (CEERT 2005).

### Imperial County Agriculture

The value of agricultural production in Imperial County ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of all California counties (ICFB 2005; DOF 2005a). The primary farming area is called the Imperial Valley, an 830-square-mile area extending from Mexico to the Salton Sea. The Imperial Valley has an extensive irrigation system, supplied with water from the Colorado River by IID (ICCED 2003).

Imperial County has over 550 farms, encompassing over 480,000 acres. Agricultural employment in Imperial County in 2000 was 11,300, and the value of production that same year was \$919.6 million. Approximately 18 percent of the total land area in Imperial County was agricultural land in 2000 (DOF 2005a). In 2003, the commodities with the highest share of agricultural value of production were cattle, alfalfa hay, leaf lettuce, and carrots (Table 6.12-2; Ten Leading Commodities in Imperial County, 2003) (ICFB 2005).

**TABLE 6.12-2**  
**TEN LEADING COMMODITIES IN IMPERIAL COUNTY, 2003**

Commodity	Value
Cattle	\$238,303,000
Alfalfa hay	\$97,062,000
Leaf lettuce	\$71,883,000
Carrots	\$60,163,000
Lettuce	\$59,338,000
Onions	\$57,981,000
Sugarbeets	\$46,520,000
Miscellaneous livestock	\$42,833,000
Cantaloupe	\$38,089,000
Wheat	\$33,249,000

Source: ICFB 2005.

**Immediate Project Vicinity**

The Project Site is located on Property owned by the IID. This Property is adjacent to and north of Beal Road, and approximately one-half mile northeast of the Town of Niland. The site is relatively flat, vacant and undeveloped, with the exception of the existing Niland Substation in the southwest corner. No economic activity currently exists on the Project Site. The substation is located at the southeast corner of the property and is not staffed.

Land within 3 miles of the site is used for agriculture and light industrial uses. A dirt road along the eastern boundary of the site leads to a county solid waste landfill, which is located along Cuff Road, approximately 3 miles northeast of Niland. Nearby economic activity includes agricultural uses such as cattle feed lots and crop growing to the north of the site, and businesses (primarily retail and service businesses) located approximately 0.5 mile west of the site in Niland. In general, the site is located in a rural desert area. The next-closest businesses are located in the city of Calipatria, 10 miles south of the Project Site.

The abandoned U.S. Marine Corps base, Camp Dunlap, is located approximately 3 miles east of the Project Site. Camp Dunlap was torn down in 1946, leaving two cement water tanks, and two small cement guardhouses, slab foundations and asphalt roads. The 640-acre parcel was given to the state of California. Between 50 and several hundred people use the former base (now named “Slab City”) as an unauthorized campground for weeks to months at a time (Carter 2005; Graves 2001). The population at the unauthorized campground decreases during summer months. The residents contribute to economic activity in the Town of Niland, and other nearby towns and cities.

**Niland**

The U.S. Census defines the Niland Census Designated Place as an approximately 1-square-mile, 30-block area bordered by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks on the north, Niland Avenue and Noffsinger Road on the south, Commercial Avenue on the east, and State Route (SR) 111 on the west.

Niland businesses include convenience and grocery shopping, and agriculture and agrarian-oriented products. Businesses in and near Niland along Highway 111 include a U.S. Post Office, two markets, a mini-mart, three restaurants, one laundromat, one hotel, and one gas station (NCP 1996).

In 2000, Niland labor force participants represented approximately 39 percent of the Niland population over age 16, a measure that is less than the state average labor force participation rate of 64 percent the same year (Census 2005c). The unemployment rate in 2000 was 6.2 percent, substantially lower than the same measure for the county. Occupations with the highest employment in Niland in 2000 were sales and office occupations (33 percent of employment); and management, professional, and related occupations (19 percent of employment). Also in 2000, industries with the highest employment were education, health, and social services (20 percent of employment); retail trade (17 percent of employment); and agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining (16 percent). More recent information for the Niland CDP is not available from the Census.

## San Diego County

San Diego County contains the closest large metropolitan area to the Project Site. Construction projects in and around Imperial County may draw labor from San Diego County if local construction labor supply is short, or if union labor is used. The California Employment Development Department uses San Diego County to represent the San Diego-Carlsbad-San Carlos metropolitan area.

Employment is highest in San Diego County in trade, transportation, and utilities (17 percent of employment); professional and business services (16 percent of employment); leisure and hospitality; local government; and educational and health services (Table 6.12-3, Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in San Diego County). Applying the industry-wide 2004 unemployment rate to construction employment in San Diego County, an average of over 4,000 construction workers could be unemployed at any one time.

Information and professional and business services were the fastest-growing industries in the 1990s, while during the period 2000 to 2004, the trade, transportation, and utilities industry and the professional and business services industry were the fastest growing. Construction employment grew 1 percent per year on average during the 1990s, and 6 percent per year during the period 2000 to 2004 (EDD 2005a).

San Diego County has a substantial labor force of approximately 1.5 million within 2 to 2.5 hours commute distance of the Project Site. This labor force represents approximately 8.5 percent of the state's labor force. The average annual increase in San Diego County's labor force was 1.3 percent between 1990 and 2000, and 2.0 percent during the period 2000 to 2004. San Diego County's unemployment rate was approximately 4.7 percent in 2004, 1.5 percentage points lower than the state rate, indicating strength in employment relative to other areas in California (EDD 2005a).

**TABLE 6.12-3  
LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND INDUSTRY  
IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

	1990	2000	2004
Civilian labor force	1,215,700	1,376,700	1,490,300
Employment	1,159,300	1,322,700	1,420,000
Civilian unemployment rate	4.6%	3.9%	4.7%
<u>Percent of employment, by industry</u>			
Farming	1%	1%	1%
Natural resources and mining	0%	0%	0%
Construction	6%	6%	7%
Manufacturing	13%	10%	8%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	18%	17%	17%
Information	2%	3%	3%
Financial activities	7%	6%	6%
Professional and business services	13%	16%	16%
Educational and health services	9%	10%	10%
Leisure and hospitality	11%	11%	11%

**TABLE 6.12-3  
LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND INDUSTRY  
IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

	1990	2000	2004
Other services	3%	4%	4%
Federal government	5%	3%	3%
State government	3%	3%	3%
Local government	10%	11%	11%

Source: EDD 2005a.

Between 2002 and 2012, employment in San Diego County is expected to grow by almost 20 percent, for an average annual rate of almost 1.8 percent. The professional and business services and other services sectors are anticipated to grow the most over this period. Construction employment is anticipated to grow by 21 percent, for an average annual increase of approximately 1.9 percent (EDD 2005b).

In 2003, personal income in San Diego County was \$105 billion, and per capita income was \$35,841. Personal income in San Diego County accounted for approximately 9 percent of total state personal income. The per capita income in San Diego County was 107 percent of the per capita income for the state as a whole (BEA 2005).

### Riverside County

Riverside County is located directly north of Imperial County. The county boundary is approximately 20 miles north of the Project Site on Highway 111. Construction projects in and around Imperial County may draw labor from Riverside County if local construction labor supply is short.

Employment is highest in Riverside County in trade, transportation, and utilities (19 percent of employment); local government (14 percent of employment); construction (13 percent of employment); and leisure and hospitality (11 percent of employment) (Table 6.12-4, Labor Force, Employment, and Industry in Riverside County). Applying the industry-wide 2004 unemployment rate to construction employment in Riverside County, an average of over 4,000 construction workers could be unemployed at any one time.

**TABLE 6.12-4  
LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY,  
IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

	1990	2000	2004
Civilian labor force	536,900	680,900	810,600
Employment	498,300	644,500	763,800
Civilian unemployment rate	7.2%	5.4%	5.8%
<u>Percent of employment, by industry</u>			
Farming	5%	4%	3%
Natural resources and mining	0%	0%	0%
Construction	10%	10%	13%
Manufacturing	10%	11%	9%

**TABLE 6.12-4**  
**LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY,**  
**IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

	1990	2000	2004
Trade, transportation and utilities	18%	18%	19%
Information	2%	1%	1%
Financial activities	5%	3%	4%
Professional and business services	8%	9%	10%
Educational and health services	8%	9%	9%
Leisure and hospitality	12%	12%	11%
Other services	3%	4%	3%
Federal government	2%	1%	1%
State government	3%	3%	3%
Local government	14%	14%	14%

Source: EDD 2005a.

Trade, transportation, and utilities and local government were the fastest-growing industries both in the 1990s and during the period 2000 to 2004. Construction employment grew substantially, by 10 percent per year on average during the 1990s, and 13 percent per year during the period 2000 to 2004 (EDD 2005a).

Riverside County has a substantial labor force of 810,600 within 1.5 to 2.5 hours commute distance of the Project Site. This labor force represents approximately 4.6 percent of the state's labor force. The average annual increase in Riverside County's labor force was 2.4 percent between 1990 and 2000, and 4.5 percent during the period 2000 to 2004. Riverside County's unemployment rate was approximately 5.8 percent in 2004, 0.4 percentage points lower than the state rate (EDD 2005a).

Between 2002 and 2012, employment in Riverside County is expected to grow by almost 30 percent, for an average annual rate of 2.7 percent. The professional and business services; construction; and trade, transportation, and utilities industries are anticipated to grow the most over this period. Construction employment is anticipated to grow by 39 percent, for an average annual increase of approximately 3.4 percent (EDD 2005b).

In 2003, personal income in Riverside County was \$44.6 billion, and per capita income was \$25,032. Personal income in Riverside County accounted for approximately 4 percent of total state personal income. The per capita income in Riverside County was 75 percent of the per capita income for the state as a whole (BEA 2005a).

### *6.12.1.2 Population and Housing*

#### *Imperial County*

Approximately 152,448 people lived in Imperial County in 2004. This population represented less than one-half of one percent of the California population that year (Census 2005a). The population density is 34 people per square mile of land area, compared to 217 people per square

mile of land area in California as a whole, 670 in San Diego County, and 214 in Riverside County (Census 2005d).

The rate of population growth in Imperial County during the period 1990-2000 was over twice that of the state of California as a whole (Census 2005a). In future years 2005-2020, the Imperial County population growth rate is expected to decline by approximately 0.7 percentage points when compared to the period 2000-2005. During that future period, Imperial County is expected to grow faster than San Diego County and the state, but slower than Riverside County (Table 6.12-5, Population Trends and Projections) (DOF 2005a).

**TABLE 6.12-5  
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

Year	Niland	Imperial County	San Diego County	Riverside County	State of California
1970	NA	74,492	1,357,854	456,916	19,953,134
1990	1,183	109,303	2,498,016	1,170,413	29,758,213
2000	1,143	142,361	2,813,833	1,545,387	33,871,648
2005	NA	161,800	3,051,280	1,877,000	36,810,358
2020	NA	214,386	3,633,572	2,675,648	43,851,741
AARG, 1970-1990	NA	1.9%	3.1%	4.8%	2.0%
AARG, 1990-2000	NA	2.7%	1.2%	2.8%	1.3%
AARG, 2000-2005	NA	2.6%	1.6%	4.0%	1.7%
AARG, 2005-2020	NA	1.9%	1.2%	2.4%	1.2%

Source: Census 2005a; DOF 2005a.

AARG = Average Annual Rate of Growth

Over three-quarters of the population in Imperial County reside in the incorporated cities. Unincorporated Imperial County is home to 34,780 residents; 22 percent of the total population in the county. Cities in Imperial County in order of population size include El Centro (population 41,030), Calexico (population 36,274), Brawley (population 24,042), Imperial (population 9,567), Calipatria (population 7,904), Holtville (population 5,745), and Westmoreland (population 2,444) (DOF 2005b). The city of Mexicali is located immediately across the border and has a population of approximately 764,900 (ICCED 2005). Niland is home to over 1,100 residents.

In January 2005, Imperial County contained 48,495 housing units, including 73 percent single-family homes, 21 percent multi-family homes, and 16 percent mobile homes. The vacancy rate at that time was 9.9 percent (Table 6.12-6, Housing, January 2005) (DOF 2005c). An important housing issue in Imperial County is the need for rehabilitation and continued maintenance of the housing stock, especially those homes of low- to moderate-income families. Most new development is occurring in the incorporated cities (ICCED 2003). In terms of type of housing, Imperial County is similar to California except that Imperial County has more mobile homes and fewer multi-family units. Imperial County has the greatest percentage of mobile homes compared to San Diego and Riverside counties. Of the three counties, San Diego has relatively more multi-family units, while Riverside has more single-family units.

**TABLE 6.12-6  
HOUSING, JANUARY 2005**

Location	Total Units	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Mobile Homes	Vacancy Rate (%)
Imperial County	48,495	63.1%	20.9%	16.0%	9.9
San Diego County	1,104,989	60.3%	35.4%	4.3%	4.4
Riverside County	690,075	71.2%	16.7%	12.1%	13.3
California	12,945,237	64.5%	31.0%	4.5%	5.9

Source: DOF 2005c.

Approximately 455 housing units were located in the Niland area in 1997, including 76 percent single-family units, 15 percent mobile homes, and 9 percent multi-family units. The housing vacancy rate was approximately 15 percent that year. A large percentage of homeowners in Niland (67 percent) do not have a house payment. The median monthly house payment on mortgages in 1998 was \$337. The median rent in 1998 in Niland was \$325 (ICGP 2003).

Home prices are substantially lower in Imperial County when compared to neighboring San Diego County (Table 6.12-7, Housing Values, 2000). Over 90 percent of homes are valued between \$50,000 and \$399,999 in Imperial County. Riverside County's median value of owner-occupied homes is approximately 46 percent higher than the same measure for Imperial County. Home prices in California in general are also higher than homes in Imperial County. Close to the Project Site, home prices are low relative to Imperial County on average. The El Centro Chamber of Commerce anticipates increases in development as southern California residents take advantage of the lower prices in Imperial County. With the new development, infrastructure and service improvements will be required to accommodate the additional residents (ECCC 2005).

**TABLE 6.12-7  
HOUSING VALUES, 2000**

Location	Percent <\$49,999	Percent \$50,000- \$149,000	Percent \$150,000- \$399,999	Percent \$400,000- \$759,999	Percent >\$750,000	Median Value
Imperial County	6.0	77.5	15.8	0.3	0.4	\$100,000
San Diego County	0.7	15.7	68.5	11.7	3.7	\$227,200
Riverside County	1.6	50.6	43.9	3.0	0.9	\$146,500
California	1.6	27.0	53.0	13.7	4.8	\$211,500
CT 101 <sup>1</sup>	30.1	68.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	\$70,700
Niland CDP <sup>2</sup>	67.8	32.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	\$44,600

<sup>1</sup> CT 101 = Census Tract 101

<sup>2</sup> CDP = Census Designated Place

Source: Census 2005e.

El Centro has over 30 temporary lodging places with over 700 rooms.<sup>4</sup> Although occupancy rates tend to be high (over 70 percent) in San Diego County due to the plentiful tourist attractions, rates in Imperial County are likely much lower. Assuming half of the rooms in El Centro are available during high farming season, and applying a general occupancy rate of 50 percent, an estimated 175 rooms would be available at any one time. To the extent occupancy rates are less than 50 percent and that farm workers are not staying in lodging facilities,<sup>5</sup> more rooms would be available.

### *Immediate Project Vicinity*

The closest residential uses to the Project Site are three single-family residences located approximately one-third of a mile east of the Project Site (directly adjacent to the Property), on Cuff Road north of Beal Road. These homes are single-story homes, estimated to be approximately 20 to 30 years old. The population at Slab City, located approximately 3 miles east of the Project Site, ranges from 50 during the summer to several hundred at other times of the year. Slab City residents live in self-contained vehicles such as trailers and recreational vehicles. During the winter months “snow birds” travel to Slab City to spend the winter where the weather is less inclement than where these snow birds travel from. These residents live with very few resources in primitive conditions relative to other parts of Imperial County, California, and the U.S. (Graves 2001).

### *Niland*

Niland’s current population according to the Niland Community Plan, which was published in 1996, is 1,224. Approximately 450 households exist in Niland. The population grew by 81 people (7.1 percent) between 1990 and 2003, at a slower rate when compared to Imperial County population.<sup>6</sup> By 2008, an estimated 47 additional people will live in Niland (NCP 1996).

### *San Diego County*

Population in San Diego County was 3 million in 2005, and grew at an average annual growth rate of 3.1 percent between 1970 and 1990, 1.1 percent faster than statewide population growth that period, and 1.2 percent in the 1990s, slightly slower than the state. During the period 2000 to 2005, San Diego County population grew 1.6 percent per year, again slightly slower than the state. The percentage of state population residing within San Diego County grew from 6.8 percent in 1970 to 8.3 percent in 2005 (DOF 2005a). Table 6.12-5, Population Trends and Projections, shows historical and projected population for San Diego.

Anticipated growth of San Diego County population during the period 2005 to 2020 is 19.1 percent, for an average annual rate of 1.2 percent, the same as the state for that period (DOF 2005a).<sup>7</sup> Table 6.12-5 shows historic and projected population in San Diego County.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on telephone and web research.

<sup>5</sup> The number of farm workers requiring lodging increases during high farming season.

<sup>6</sup> Between 1990 and 2003, Imperial County population grew 38.6 percent, over five times faster than Niland.

<sup>7</sup> Note that forecasts were made prior to 2005, so therefore may not reflect economic activity in late 2004 or 2005.

The city of San Diego in San Diego County, the largest city in the county by a factor of six, had a population of 1.3 million in 2005. The cities of Chula Vista, Oceanside, and Escondido each had between 140,000 and 220,000 residents in 2005. The remaining 14 cities in San Diego County each had less than 100,000 residents in 2005 (DOF 2005b).

In 2005, San Diego County contained 1.1 million housing units. The housing stock consisted of 60 percent single-family homes, 35 percent multi-family homes, and 4 percent mobile homes. The vacancy rate at that time was 4.4 percent (DOF 2005c). San Diego County is a major metropolitan area, containing the second largest city in California and hundreds of temporary lodging places.

### *Riverside County*

The Riverside County population in 2005 was 1.9 million, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 4.8 percent between 1970 and 1990, 2.8 percent higher than statewide population growth for that period, and 2.8 percent in the 1990s, also substantially higher than the state rate. During the period 2000 to 2005, Riverside County population grew 4.0 percent per year, again faster than the state. The percentage of state population residing within Riverside County grew from 2.3 percent in 1970 to 6.1 percent in 2005 (DOF 2005a). Table 6.12-5, Population Trends and Projections, shows historical and projected population for Riverside County.

Anticipated growth of Riverside County population during the period 2005 to 2020 is 43 percent, for an average annual rate of 2.4 percent, a slightly lower rate when compared to the period 2000 to 2005, but twice the rate of the state for the same period (DOF 2005a).<sup>8</sup> Table 6.12-5 shows historic and projected population in Riverside County.

The three largest cities in Riverside County are Riverside (population 285,540), Moreno Valley (population 165,330), and Corona (population 144,100). Eleven Riverside County cities have a population between 30,000 and 86,000. The remaining 10 cities are each home to 29,000 residents or less. The smallest city in Riverside County, Indian Wells, has 4,780 residents (DOF 2005b).

In 2005, Riverside County contained 690,100 housing units. The housing stock consisted of 71 percent single-family homes, 17 percent multi-family homes, and 12 percent mobile homes. The vacancy rate at that time was 13.3 percent (DOF 2005c). Riverside County contains hundreds of lodging facilities located throughout its 24 cities.

#### *6.12.1.3 Public Services and Utilities*

### *Fire Protection and Emergency Response*

The Niland Fire District (NFD) serves the community of Niland and 525 square miles of unincorporated Imperial County. The NFD operates two stations, the main station at Niland, and a second station at Bombay Beach, approximately 18 miles northwest of the Project site. The Niland station staff includes one fire chief, two full-time firefighters, and twelve volunteer firefighters. Equipment at the Niland station includes three Type I engines and one medical

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<sup>8</sup> Note that forecasts were made prior to 2005, so therefore may not reflect economic activity in late 2004 or 2005.

rescue unit with four-wheel drive. The Bombay Beach station staff includes one captain, one part-time firefighter, and two volunteers. Bombay Beach is located approximately 18 miles northwest of the Project Site. All NFD equipment is in good operating condition, although the newest engine is 15 years old (Aleksick 2006).

The NFD has a mutual aid plan in effect, and has automatic mutual aid with the Calipatria Fire Department. For emergency medical helicopter service, the NFD uses Mercy Air out of San Diego and the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona. Mercy Air is locating a unit in Imperial County in 2006 (Aleksick 2006).

Gold Cross Ambulance is located at 905 S. Imperial Avenue in El Centro, and is the primary ambulance service for the area in which the Project Site is located. Gold Cross Ambulance is a division of Schaefer Ambulance, which provides ambulance service from locations throughout southern California. West of the Salton Sea, West Shore Ambulance provides service. The county and city fire departments also have paramedics able to respond to needs for service (Aleksick 2006).

### ***Law Enforcement***

The Imperial County Sheriff's (ICS) Department provides public safety and law enforcement services to the unincorporated areas of the county, including the Project Site. The ICS headquarters are located at 328 Applestill Road, in El Centro, approximately 30 miles south of the site. The Corrections Division of the ICS employs 129 people, and the Patrol Division employs 114 sworn officers (Carter 2005). A Sheriff's substation is located at 218 East First Street in Niland and is one of six substations located throughout the county (Carter 2005). The Patrol Division is centrally organized and located, and officers are assigned to designated patrol areas on a shift-by-shift basis depending on need. The Project Site is included in the North County Patrol area (ICS 2005). Although the local Niland Sheriff's substation is not staffed full-time, a sheriff assigned to Niland is on call at all times. Response times to Niland are generally less than 45 minutes (Carter 2005).

In addition to general law enforcement call for service, the Sheriff's Office dispatchers also handle emergency medical service (EMS) calls and Gold Cross ambulance calls (ICS 2005).

The Imperial County Sheriff's Office has mutual aid agreements with all other Imperial County agencies, and the ability to call on law enforcement agencies outside the county for assistance, when needed, under the California Emergency Response Plan. Other law enforcement agencies within the county include the El Centro Police Department (ECPD) at 150 North 11<sup>th</sup> Street in El Centro. The ECPD employs 47 officers. The Imperial Police Department is located at 424 South Imperial Avenue in Imperial. The cities of Brawley, Calexico, Holtville, Calipatria, and Westmoreland each have a municipal police department (CPOST 2005).

The CHP enforces law on state roads in Imperial County, and maintains offices in El Centro (El Centro Dispatch Center at 2331 Highway 86 in Imperial) and in Calexico (Calexico Inspection Facility at 1700 East Carr Road in Calexico). The CHP provides traffic enforcement and accident investigations throughout the county (CHP 2005).

U.S. Immigration and Border Patrol provides patrol of the United States-Mexico border. Two ports of entry exist in the city of Calexico in Imperial County: Calexico West and Calexico East.

### *Schools*

Seventeen school districts provide educational services to Imperial County families. These districts include 37 elementary schools, seven high schools, and six adult schools. The Imperial County Office of Education serves as an intermediary between the school districts and the State Department of Education. Services provided in Imperial County include Special Education, Migrant Education, Youth Employment Services, and the Regional Occupation Program (ICGP 2003).

The Project Site is located within the boundaries of the Calipatria Unified School District (CUSD), which includes two high schools, one middle school, one primary school, and one elementary school, and enrolls approximately 1,261 students. Grace Smith Elementary School in Niland is the closest school to the Project Site, and enrolls 270 students, grades kindergarten through eight. The remaining four schools in the CUSD are located within the city limits of Calipatria, and are accessed by school bus by students living in and near Niland. Two preschools serve Niland families (NCP 1996).

Enrollment in CUSD has decreased steadily from 1,486 during the 1993-1994 school year to 1,261 during the 2004-2005 school year, a decrease of 1.5 percent per year on average (DOE 2005). Total 2004-2005 enrollment in Imperial County was approximately 35,720 students, and had increased 1.1 percent on average since the 1993-1994 school year (DOE 2005). Higher or occupational education facilities include Imperial Valley College, Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, and the Imperial Valley Campus of San Diego State University (ICCED 2003).

CUSD imposes school impact fees of \$0.36 per square foot of commercial or industrial space (Wigg 2005).

### *Medical Facilities*

The two hospitals located in Imperial County are the El Centro Regional Medical Center (30 miles south of the site) and Pioneers Memorial Hospital (18 miles south of the site, in Brawley). The El Centro Regional Medical Center has 165 beds, and Pioneers Memorial Hospital has 99 beds. The next closest hospital is the Yuma Regional Medical Center in Yuma, Arizona (90 miles southeast of the site).

The Clinicas de Salud Del Pueblo, Inc. Niland Health Clinic (NHC) serves residents near the Project Site from its location at Fourth Street and Highway 111 in Niland. The NHC operates Monday through Friday, with eight support staff and medical aids, one registered nurse, one part-time nurse practitioner, and one on-contract doctor. The NHC accepts emergency patients, but has limited emergency response capabilities. Pioneers Memorial Hospital is the closest facility that can provide response for severe medical conditions, emergencies, and traumas. Response time to the Project Site from Pioneers Memorial Hospital is approximately 25 minutes<sup>9</sup> (NCP 1996).

As stated above, ambulance service is provided by Gold Cross Ambulance, located in El Centro. Other health services provided in Imperial County include behavioral health services, child

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<sup>9</sup> Response time based in the 20-25 minutes response time to Niland estimate given in the Niland Community Plan (1996).

support services, general health services, social services, and the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission (IC 2006). In addition, medical facilities near the Project Site include those listed in Section 6.8, Public Health and Safety.

### *Utilities*

GSWC provides potable water to the Town of Niland. The Niland Sanitation District is responsible for collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater generated within Niland. No county-assisted refuse collection system exists in Niland. Refuse is burned, taken to a dumpsite, or removed by private companies.

The Imperial Irrigation District provides electricity to the Niland community and the SCGC provides natural gas service to Niland. Local telephone service is provided by SBC Communications, and cable television is not available. Internet services are available from several companies, including Direct Way, which offers high-speed Internet (Broadband and DSL) (NCP 1996).

#### **6.12.1.4 Public Finance and Fiscal Issues**

In 2000, total taxable sales in Imperial County were approximately \$1,403 million, and total taxable retail sales the same year were \$940 million.<sup>10</sup> Imperial County's taxable sales represented 0.3 percent of the state's taxable sales (DOF 2005a). The sales and use tax rate (includes state, local and district) is 7.75 percent (CBOE 2005).

Imperial County's total assessed value was \$7.784 billion in fiscal year 2004-2005. Taxes were collected on assessed value of non-exempt properties; that is, on the net assessed value of \$7.476 billion (Buckner 2005). The average Imperial County property tax rate is approximately 1.15 percent (Buckner 2005). Applying the average property tax rate to the net assessed value, property taxes collected for the fiscal year 2004-2005 were approximately \$86.0 million.

The Project Site is located on parcel number 021-160-014, owned by the IID, and valued by the Imperial County Assessor at \$53,024 for the land only. No value is listed for a structure on this parcel. Parcel number 021-160-014 is exempt from property taxes (Araujo 2005). The IID does not currently pay property tax or payments in lieu of taxes on this parcel.

The parcel is located within Tax Rate Area (TRA) 058-003. Within this TRA, property taxes are collected at a rate of 1.2419 percent per \$100 in assessed value. The first 1 percent of tax collected is distributed among the County General Fund, County Library, County Fire Protection, Niland Fire District, Pioneers Memorial Hospital District, Imperial Community College, Calipatria Unified School District, and seven entities that are part of the County Office of Education. The remaining 0.2419 percent goes toward payment of unpaid bonds for the Calipatria Unified School District, Pioneers Memorial Hospital District, and Imperial Community College.

The Imperial County 2004-2005 Approved Budget identifies Imperial County as a growth area, challenged with balancing operational needs with available financing. Total budget appropriations and expenditures for this budget were \$254.2 million, representing a 12.4 percent

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<sup>10</sup> 2000 figures were used as they were the most recent available from the Department of Finance.

increase when compared to the prior fiscal year's actual budget. Top appropriation categories are public assistance (35 percent), public protection (24 percent), and general government (20 percent). Top expenditures categories are salaries and benefits (40 percent), and services and supplies (37 percent) (Table 6.12-8, 2004-2005 Adopted Budget Appropriations and Expenditures) (ICB 2005).

**TABLE 6.12-8**  
**2004-2005 ADOPTED BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES**

Appropriations		Expenditures	
Function	Percent of Total Appropriations	Budget Class	Percent of Total Expenditures
General government	20%	Salaries and benefits	40%
Public protection	24%	Services and supplies	37%
Public ways and facilities	7%	Other charges	19%
Health and sanitation	14%	Capital assets	4%
Public assistance	35%	Contingencies	0%
Education	1%	Other financing sources	-1%
Recreation	0%	Transfers	0%
Contingency	0%	--	--
Special district	0%	--	--

Source: ICB 2005.

The total additional financing listed in the 2004-2005 Approved Budget of \$243.7 million, added to the fund balance of \$41.5 million, results in a total available amount of \$285.2 million. General Fund revenues account for 60 percent (\$156.1 million) of this total amount. The categories of loss reserve medical plans, public works road construction and maintenance, and loss reserve workers compensation each contribute between 5 and 7 percent of the total, and the remaining categories each contribute less than 3 percent (Table 6.12-9, 2004-2005 Adopted Budget General Fund) (ICB 2005).

**TABLE 6.12-9**  
**2004-2005 ADOPTED BUDGET GENERAL FUND**

Source	Percent of Estimated Additional Financing <sup>1</sup>
Current taxes	13%
Licenses, permits	1%
Fines, forfeits and penalties	2%
Revenue for use money prop	1%
Intergovernmental revenue	44%
Federal revenues	23%
Charges for services	16%
Miscellaneous revenues	0%

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Estimated Additional Financing is the "new" amount of financing for the fiscal year, not including the General Fund balance. For this fiscal year, the estimated additional financing represented 98 percent of the total General Fund amount.

Source: ICB 2005.

Top categories contributing to General Fund revenue are intergovernmental revenue (44 percent), federal revenues (23 percent), charges for services (16 percent), and current taxes (13 percent) (Table 6.12-9; ICB 2005).

## **6.12.2 Environmental Consequences**

### **6.12.2.1 Significance Criteria**

The criteria used in determining whether Project-related socioeconomic impacts would be significant are presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Impacts attributable to the Project are considered significant if they would:

- Induce substantial growth or concentration of population.
- Induce substantial increases in demand for public services and utilities.
- Displace a large number of people.
- Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community.
- Result in substantial long-term disruptions to businesses.

### **6.12.2.2 Discussion of Assumptions and Selected Impacts**

To the extent practicable, the applicant has committed to give local preference in hiring and procurements. However, the assumptions in the socioeconomic impact analysis related to hiring labor and purchasing materials imply that a small portion of labor and materials purchases would occur outside of Imperial County. The estimated worst-case assumptions are used for the purpose of approximating a conservative scenario under which socioeconomic impacts, including population and public services impacts, could be evaluated.

### **6.12.2.3 Economic Impacts**

#### **Construction**

Project construction would begin in September 2007. The construction period would last approximately 9 months, ending with commercial operation in May 2008.

Construction employment would peak at approximately 60 workers, including 50 craft workers and 10 contractor staff, and average 40 workers over the construction period. Most workers are expected to originate from the El Centro area in Imperial County, with the remaining split between San Diego County and Riverside County. For the purposes of the impact analysis, 40 percent of the workers are assumed to originate from Imperial County, 30 percent from San Diego County, and 30 percent from Riverside County, assuming union labor. Table 6.12-10, Construction Employment, shows construction labor by month for the Project.

**TABLE 6.12-10  
CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT**

<b>Job Category/Month</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
Boilermakers				2	4	2			
Carpenters	2	6	8	8	6	4	2	2	
Electricians	2	4	6	8	8	8	6	4	2
Insulation Workers							2	2	2
Iron Workers	2	4	6	6	6	4	2		
Laborers	4	4	6	6	6	4	4	2	2
Millwrights			2	4	6	4	2		
Operators	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	2	2
Painters						2	4	6	4
Pipefitters		2	4	8	10	10	4	2	2
<b><i>Craft Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>14</i></b>	<b><i>24</i></b>	<b><i>34</i></b>	<b><i>44</i></b>	<b><i>50</i></b>	<b><i>42</i></b>	<b><i>30</i></b>	<b><i>20</i></b>	<b><i>14</i></b>
Management	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2
Engineering	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2
Document Control	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Commissioning						2	4	4	4
<b><i>Staff Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>	<b><i>12</i></b>	<b><i>14</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
IID Personnel	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

**Average Labor Force: 40**

Peak Labor Force: 60

Peak construction employment would represent approximately 4 percent of construction jobs in Imperial County (EDD 2005a; Mason 2005). Given the available construction labor force in Imperial County and the supporting construction labor forces in San Diego and Riverside counties, it is expected that an adequate available labor force within daily or weekly commute distance would be found to supply the work force associated with construction of the Project.

For purposes of this analysis, the cost of Project construction is assumed to be approximately \$69.4 million. The total payroll for construction of the Project is projected to be approximately 15 percent of the total construction contract (\$10.4 million). The remaining cost of \$59.0 million is the cost of equipment, materials, supplies, engineering, fees, insurance, taxes, administrative cost, and other direct and indirect owner's costs. Approximately 2.2 percent of non-labor construction costs would be spent in Imperial County. For example, gravel and concrete would likely be purchased within Imperial County. To the extent practicable, other building materials and supplies such as scaffolding, insulation, and paint would be purchased locally.

Businesses in Niland would experience increased levels of noise, dust, and traffic due to construction. See Section 6.7, Noise, for information on noise impacts from construction. Although trucks would pass through business and populated areas, they would not likely disrupt

employee or customer traffic or disturb local businesses, nor would they pass through business areas at hours other than daytime hours. Approximately 75 percent of construction-related vehicles would travel diagonally through Niland on Niland Avenue from Highway 111, turn right on Main Street, cross the railroad tracks, and continue on Beal Road to the site.

Approximately 25 percent of construction vehicles would travel straight through Niland on Main Street to or from Highway 111. More trips in the afternoon would likely occur on Main Street through Niland, because workers may stop in Niland for food or gasoline. This spending would represent increase sales in Niland.

Construction of the Project would not disrupt or divide an established community, because the Project would occur on property zoned for manufacturing or industrial use, located apart from the Town of Niland. No substantial long-term disruptions to businesses would result from construction of the Project.

### *Indirect and Induced Economic Impacts from Construction*

Construction activity would result in secondary economic impacts (indirect and induced impacts) that would occur within Imperial County. Secondary employment effects would include indirect employment due to the purchase of goods and services by firms involved with construction, and induced employment due to construction workers spending their income in their local area. Similarly, indirect and induced income and spending effects also occur as “ripple” effects from construction. Tax impacts attributable to construction costs would accrue to local governments, and would result in indirect and induced tax impacts. Indirect and induced impacts were estimated using IMPLAN economic modeling software, an input/output model specific for Imperial County.<sup>11</sup> Estimated indirect and induced effects of construction that would occur within Imperial County would be an additional 34 jobs, \$1.0 million in labor income, and approximately \$2.9 million in output<sup>12</sup>.

### *Operation*

The Project would be designed for unmanned operation. Project controls would be linked over a fiber optic communication network to the IID SOC. The Project could be started or shut down from the SOC, as well as from the Project itself. During a remote start, an operator would be dispatched to the Project to assure proper startup and operation. Operation and maintenance of the Project would require two additional employees (1.5 full-time equivalent employees). These two jobs would likely be filled from the existing Imperial County labor force.

Annual operation costs for the Project would be approximately \$670,000, not including fuel costs. Approximately 30 percent of this annual cost would be the cost of labor (\$200,000 in payroll). Approximately 40 percent of the non-labor annual operation costs (\$188,000) would be spent in Imperial County each year.

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<sup>11</sup> IMPLAN Professional Version 2.0, copyright Minnesota IMPLAN Group, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Output includes spending for materials and supplies (non-labor costs), plus value added, which comprises employee compensation, proprietary income, other property income, and indirect business taxes. IMPLAN sector number 45 (“other maintenance and repair construction”) was used for this analysis and includes economic activity such as construction of power plants, transmission lines, and pipelines.

Operation of the Project would not result in any long-term disruption to an established community, or in a substantial long-term disruption to businesses. The closest businesses are in the Town of Niland, approximately 0.5 mile to the west and southwest.

### *Indirect and Induced Economic Impacts from Operation*

Similar to construction, operation of the Project would result in indirect and induced economic impacts that would occur within Imperial County. Indirect and induced impacts were estimated using IMPLAN, and are based on the direct economic costs of construction and operation of the Project. Unlike indirect and induced impacts from construction, indirect and induced impacts from operation would represent *permanent* increases in area jobs, income, and spending; but would still lag behind direct effects by approximately 6 to 12 months.<sup>13</sup> Estimated indirect and induced effects of annual operation that would occur within Imperial County would be an additional two permanent jobs; approximately \$50,000 in labor income, and approximately \$143,000 in spending. These indirect and induced effects would “ripple” through the economy and would occur in all industries.

#### **6.12.2.4 Population and Housing Impacts**

##### *Construction*

A portion of the 24 to 36 workers originating from San Diego and Riverside counties would commute to the Project Site on a weekly basis and stay in temporary housing during the week. Assuming that half of the workers share lodging (two workers per room), demand would exist during the construction period for approximately 18 to 27 hotel rooms or recreational vehicle (RV) spaces. Workers would not likely move to Imperial County or bring families with them due to the short duration of the construction period. The available temporary housing in El Centro would be adequate to meet the demand for temporary housing during construction. The City of El Centro has approximately 700 hotel rooms.

Construction of the Project would not cause any substantial permanent population increases or changes in concentration of population due to the temporary nature of construction.

Construction workers would be a temporary addition to the Imperial County population during the week, especially during the peak period. Housing demand would not increase due to construction of the Project.

##### *Operation*

Population or housing impacts associated with operation would not occur. Operation would require two additional workers. Even if both these employees moved to the area from somewhere outside Imperial County and brought their families, the increase in population and demand for housing could be accommodated. Operation of the Project would not induce substantial growth or concentration of population or substantial increases in demand for housing.

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<sup>13</sup> Fuel costs were not included in the IMPLAN model because the prices for these costs are variable and unknown, and the spending would not likely occur in Imperial County or the 3-county area. IMPLAN sector 30 (power generation and supply) was used for this analysis.

Displacements would not occur as a result of this Project, nor would housing demand increase due to operation.

#### *6.12.2.5 Public Services and Utilities*

##### *Fire Protection and Emergency Response*

The Niland Fire District would provide fire protection and emergency response services to the site during construction and operation. Also, a fire protection system will be included in the Project design. The Project would include an underground fire water loop and on-site fire water storage capabilities, using the raw water tank. The raw water tank maintains a minimum of 216,000 gallons of water reserved for use in case of a fire. The fire pump and storage capacity is based upon 1,500-gpm outside fire flow, plus 300-gpm automatic suppression flow, for 2 hours. The fire water loop can be pressurized by either an electric or diesel fire pump that would be located in the fire pump house. A small electric jockey pump maintains pressure in the fire water loop when no demand exists.

The fire protection system would be designed per California Fire Code requirements and National Fire Protection Association standards, utilizing equipment approved by Underwriters Labs and Factory Mutual and the California State Fire Marshal. The local Fire Marshal would review and approve the plant fire protection philosophy. All construction materials would be non-combustible.

The enclosures around the CTG are protected by a CO<sub>2</sub>-based fire suppression system, as supplied by the CTG manufacturer. This system includes heat and gas detection devices.

The oil-filled transformers will be physically separated from adjacent equipment and structures. The fuel gas compressor enclosure would be monitored by heat and gas detection devices and protected by a deluge suppression system. The control building and warehouse would be monitored by fire detection devices, and protected by a wet-pipe sprinkler system. The Project will also include fire detection and alarm systems with remote fire department notification. Public agencies will also provide fire protection.

The Niland Fire District has staff and resources adequate to serve the Project during construction and operation (Aleksick 2006). Neither construction nor the additional two permanent employees will result in a substantial increase in demand for public services.

##### *Law Enforcement*

The Imperial County Sheriff's Department will provide law enforcement services to the Project. The Sheriff's Office is adequate and has sufficient resources to provide law enforcement services to the Project, during construction and operation (Carter 2005). Neither construction nor the additional two IID employees will result in a substantial increase in demand for public services.

Sheriff Carter recommends that the construction site be fenced, and that onsite security be provided during construction, to include security cameras and an alarm system at a minimum. The Sheriff's deputy assigned to that area would have 300 square miles to cover, including widely scattered residences in the North County Patrol area (Carter 2005).

Onsite security will be provided by the applicant to assist with law enforcement during operation. The entire Project Site, including stormwater retention ponds, will be enclosed by an 8-foot tall metal fabric security fence, with barbed wire or razor wire on top. Access to the site will be controlled by security gates.

### *Schools*

Schools will not experience any meaningful impact during construction, as any population increase will be small and temporary, and will not likely involve school-age children.

A negligible impact would occur due to operation because just two new employees may be added due to the Project. If the two employees move to the area from outside Imperial County and bring families with school-age children, an additional two students would be attending schools in the area, based on an average students-per-household number of 0.7<sup>14</sup>. Were both additional students to attend schools in the three districts in and near the city of El Centro, the increase attributable to the Project would represent less than one-tenth of one percent of 2004-2005 school year student enrollment in those three districts. Neither construction nor the additional two permanent employees will result in a substantial increase in demand for public education services.

New roofed structures that will be part of the Project will total approximately 17,950 square feet in size. Based on this estimate, the applicant would be required to pay school impact fees to the CUSD of approximately \$6,500. This payment would be a one-time revenue increase for the CUSD.

### *Medical Facilities*

The medical facilities listed in Section 6.12.1.3 could accommodate the temporary increase in demand for services associated with the construction workforce. No permanent increase in demand for medical facilities would occur because no operation employees would be stationed permanently at the Project Site.

### *Utilities*

IID will provide electricity to the site during construction and operation. During construction, the applicant would provide temporary utility services for the construction trailers, laydown area, and construction area.

The Project will include a restroom facility with temporary cistern/holding tank for plant sanitary discharge. The GSWC will provide potable water supply to the site.

An existing Niland potable water main runs diagonally from the northeast to the southwest across the north half of the Property. A lateral to serve the Project will connect to the existing water main near along the western Property boundary, will run due south along the Property line, and then turn east and terminate at a meter station in the northwest corner of the Project Site.

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<sup>14</sup> The estimated number of students per household was calculated for Imperial County. The calculation was based on the number of housing units in Imperial County in 2005, and the enrollment in Imperial County during the 2004-2005 school year.

Natural gas will be supplied to the Project via a lateral that connects to two parallel SCGC lines that currently extend along the east side of the property. The new natural gas lateral pipeline will be routed west along Beal Road and then turn north into the metering station on the Project Site.

A new stormwater retention basin (for stormwater flows from the Project Site) and a new detention basin (for management of stormwater flows from the Property) will be located along the south edge of the Property in southern the transmission corridor. There will also be a stormwater detention basin located in the northwest corner of the Project Site.

The Project will include auxiliary systems such as potable water (human use, emergency shower, eyewash stations), raw water, fire water, demineralized water, aqueous ammonia, fuel gas, compressed air, contact stormwater, and sanitary sewer.

#### **6.12.2.6 Fiscal Impacts**

After construction, the assessed value of the property could increase by the estimated value of the improvements. Facility construction would add \$59.7 to \$74.4 million to the current assessed value of \$53,024, for an estimated new assessed value of \$59.8 to \$74.5 million for the land and the new structures. This represents up to 1 percent of the total assessed value in Imperial County in fiscal year 2004-2005.

The school impact fee of approximately \$8,300 would be a one-time revenue increase for the CUSD.

The applicant does not currently pay property taxes or payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) on the parcel.

Sales tax revenues accruing to Imperial County would increase due to the taxable Project construction costs of \$55 million. The one-time influx of sales tax revenue due to Project construction costs will be approximately \$4 million, which is approximately 4 percent higher than the sales tax revenue accrued by Imperial County in 2000.

Sales tax revenues could also increase slightly due to increased retail sales in the area (e.g., gas and food from construction worker purchases and from the small amount of supplies purchased locally). However, the increased revenues will not likely constitute a substantial increase relative to total county revenues.

#### **6.12.3 Environmental Justice**

The CEC Data Adequacy process requires a discussion of the potential for disproportionate impacts from the Project on minority or low-income people (Section 2022(b)(4)). Additionally, Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*, signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994, requires federal government agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal action on the health or environment of minority and low income populations. The USEPA has published several guidelines for addressing environmental justice issues, including *Draft Title VI Guidance for EPA Assistance Recipients Administering Environmental Permitting Programs* and *Draft Revised Guidance for Investigating Title VI Administrative Complaints Challenging Permits* (USEPA 2000). This analysis uses the federal guidelines to analyze potential environmental justice impacts, including two steps. first, this analysis evaluates

whether the potentially affected community includes minority or low-income population. If so, the second step is to determine whether potential environmental impacts attributable to the Project would fall disproportionately on minority and low-income residents of the community. The CEC uses 50 percent minority or low-income as a threshold for identifying geographic areas that are “minority” or “low-income.”

Figure 6.12-1, Minority Populations and Persons Living Below Poverty within the Six-Mile Radius of the Project, shows that census tracts 101 and 124 in Imperial County fall within a 6-mile radius of the Project Site. Census tract 124 is 25 percent minority and therefore falls below the threshold of 50 percent, and is not identified as a “minority” census tract or community (see Table 6.12-11, Race and Poverty Data). Census tract 101 is 74 percent minority and is therefore identified as a “minority” census tract. The percentages of the populations that live below poverty are less than 50 percent and on par with the county as a whole, at 23 percent for census tract 101 and 22 percent for census tract 124. Because a portion of the population near the Project Site is identified as “minority,” the Project could potentially affect minority populations.

**TABLE 6.12-11  
RACE AND POVERTY DATA**

Area	Population	Minority Population		Percentage Living Below Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Census Tracts with 6-Mile Radius					
Census Tract 101	9,586	7,081	74%	1,287	23%
Census Tract 124	1,647	417	25%	356	22%
Nearby Towns/Cities					
Niland CCD	1,143	735	64%	258	21%
City of El Centro	37,835	30,998	82%	8,405	23%
County and Nearby Counties					
Imperial County	142,361	113,593	80%	29,681	23%
Riverside County	1,545,387	756,556	49%	214,084	14%
San Diego County	2,813,833	1,265,000	45%	338,399	12%
State of California	33,871,648	18,054,858	53%	4,706,130	14%

Notes:

For the purpose of this analysis, minority races include White Hispanic, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and all other races.

Poverty status was determined by dividing the population living below poverty by the population for whom poverty status is determined, which excludes those living in institutional housing. In census tract 101, over 4,000 residents live in institutional housing (Calipatria State Prison) and therefore are not counted in the population for whom poverty status is determined (Census 2005f). The population living below poverty (1,287) as a percentage of total population (9,586) is 13 percent.

Source: Census 2005b.

Typical environmental justice concerns for a project of this nature are residential or business displacements, water quality, noise, and air quality impacts. No residential or business displacements would occur due to the Project. Based on the findings of no significant impacts in the areas of water resources, noise, and air quality resources, environmental justice impacts are unlikely to occur.

The SPPE analysis determined that no impacts to water would occur because the Project would not affect any of the following water resource impact areas (see Section 6.13, Water Resources, for further details):

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements
- Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern, including through the alteration of a stream course or river, resulting in substantial erosion
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern, including through the alteration of a stream course or river, resulting in substantial surface runoff
- Create or contribute surface water runoff that would exceed existing stormwater drainage systems, or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff
- Otherwise substantially degrade water quality
- Place structures or housing within a 100-year flood hazard area

The SPPE finds that no noise impacts would occur at residences as a result of Project construction. Further, the SPPE shows sufficient evidence that the Project would not result in a noise impact to residential receptors during operation.

The SPPE finds that the contribution of the Project to the existing air quality situation around Niland would not be significant.

According to the Imperial County Office of Environmental Health (Johnston 2005), no health studies have been performed for the Imperial County population or for specific populations within Imperial County that pertain to environmental health issues, including but not limited to water and air quality.

An Environmental Data Resources Inc. environmental database search (EDR 2006) showed fifteen locations within 5 miles<sup>15</sup> of the Project Site that are listed on national or California state environmental databases. No properties within 5 miles were listed on the USEPA National Priority List. The closest of these fifteen locations include three locations between 0.5 and 1.0 mile southwest of the Project Site, in the Town of Niland. These locations include the following, which total more than three because (1) some locations have more than one site, and (2) some sites are listed on more than one database.

- One Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System, No Further Remedial Action Planned (CERCLIS-NFRAP) site.
- Two sites list as public drinking water wells with detectable levels of contamination.
- Two sites on the Facility Index System environmental database.
- One site on the Hazardous Waste Manifest.

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<sup>15</sup> Five miles was used rather than six miles (as required by CEC) because a five-mile query is standard for Environmental Data Resources, Inc. To supplement this data to include up to a six-mile radius, discussions were held with the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (Ramirez 2006) to identify major pollution sources between five and six miles from the site. This supplemental information is presented in this section.

- Four historical underground storage tank sites.
- One leaking underground storage tank site.
- Three Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) sites.
- One site listed as a pesticide-producing establishment.
- Three sites listed on the Statewide Environmental Evaluation and Planning System.
- One recycling facility (EDR 2006).

The 15 locations identified in the EDR database search are identified in Figure 6.12-1, Minority Populations and Persons Living Below Poverty within the Six-Mile Radius of the Project.

In order to supplement the five-mile study to include the area between five and six miles, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) (Ramirez 2006) was consulted. The APCD identified the ten power plants in the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area as the remaining pollution source within six miles of the site. According to the APCD, approximately two of these ten power plants could be located within the six-mile radius (see Figure 6.12-1). This area is located southwest of the Project Site, within the region of influence of the city of Calipatria.

Although one census tract exists within six miles of the Project site that is a minority census tract (as discussed above in this section), the Project's impacts would not be significant. Therefore, no environmental justice impacts would occur.

#### **6.12.4 Cumulative Impacts**

Imperial County planning staff identified no other industrial or commercial projects near Niland that are planned or are currently under construction.

Other development activity in the area includes expanding residential development, and associated transportation and other infrastructure improvements. If other construction projects occur at the same time as construction of the Project, demand for labor could increase. However, the size of the combined labor pool in Imperial County, San Diego County, and Riverside County would be adequate to meet this demand. Although other projects that arise in future years could increase permanent population and demand for services in Imperial County, the Project will result in two new permanent employees who would likely already live in the area, and would therefore represent a negligible addition to any cumulative impact of population growth and related increase in demand for services.

#### **6.12.5 Mitigation Measures**

The Project would result in beneficial economic effects to Imperial County. No significant adverse impacts were identified. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

#### **6.12.6 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards**

No specific federal statutes, ordinances, or regulations apply to socioeconomic impacts. California State Planning Law (Government Code Sections 65302 et seq.) requires that each city and county adopt a General Plan, consisting of seven mandatory elements, to guide planning and

development within the jurisdiction. Most jurisdictions do not have laws, ordinances, or regulations specifically addressing the socioeconomic aspects of a Project.

As stated in Section 6.12.3, Executive Order 12898 *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations* (1994) requires federal government agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal action on the health or environment of minority and low income populations. USEPA has adopted the Order, and the California Environmental Protection Agency has established a working group for environmental justice concerns. The CEC receives federal funding and therefore must address environmental justice concerns associated with projects under its permitting jurisdiction. Environmental justice concerns related to the Project are addressed in Section 6.12.3.

## 6.12.7 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts

Various public service agencies were contacted in the course of the socioeconomic investigation to check on levels of activity and expected impacts of the Project. Table 6.12-12, Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts, lists such agencies.

**TABLE 6.12-12**  
**INVOLVED AGENCIES AND AGENCY CONTACTS**

Issue	Agency/Address	Contact/Title	Telephone
Fiscal resources	Imperial County Assessor's Office 940 W. Main Street El Centro, CA 92243	Irma Araujo Roy Buckner	(760) 482-4244
Fiscal resources	Imperial County Auditor's Office 940 W. Main Street El Centro, CA 92243	Mary Ann Chu-Longoria	(760) 482-4556
Fire protection services	Niland Fire District 8071 Luxor Avenue Niland, CA 92257	Mike Aleksick, Fire Marshall	(760) 359-0410
Law enforcement	Imperial County Sheriff's Department 328 Applestill Road El Centro, CA 92243	Harold Carter, Sheriff	(800) 452-2051
Labor	California Employment Development Dept. Labor Market Information Div. 7000 Franklin Blvd., Suite 1100 Sacramento, CA 95823	Cheryl Mason, Labor Market Consultant for Imperial County	(858) 689-6544
Utilities	Imperial County Department of Environmental Health Services 940 W. Main Street El Centro, CA 92243	Mark Johnston	(760) 482-4203
Schools	Calipatria Unified School District 501 W. Main Street Calipatria, CA 92233	Lori Wigg	(760) 348-2892
Pollution sources	Imperial County Agricultural Commission – Air Quality 150 S. Ninth Street El Centro, CA 92243	Jesus Ramirez	(760) 482-4314

### 6.12.8 Permits Required and Permit Schedule

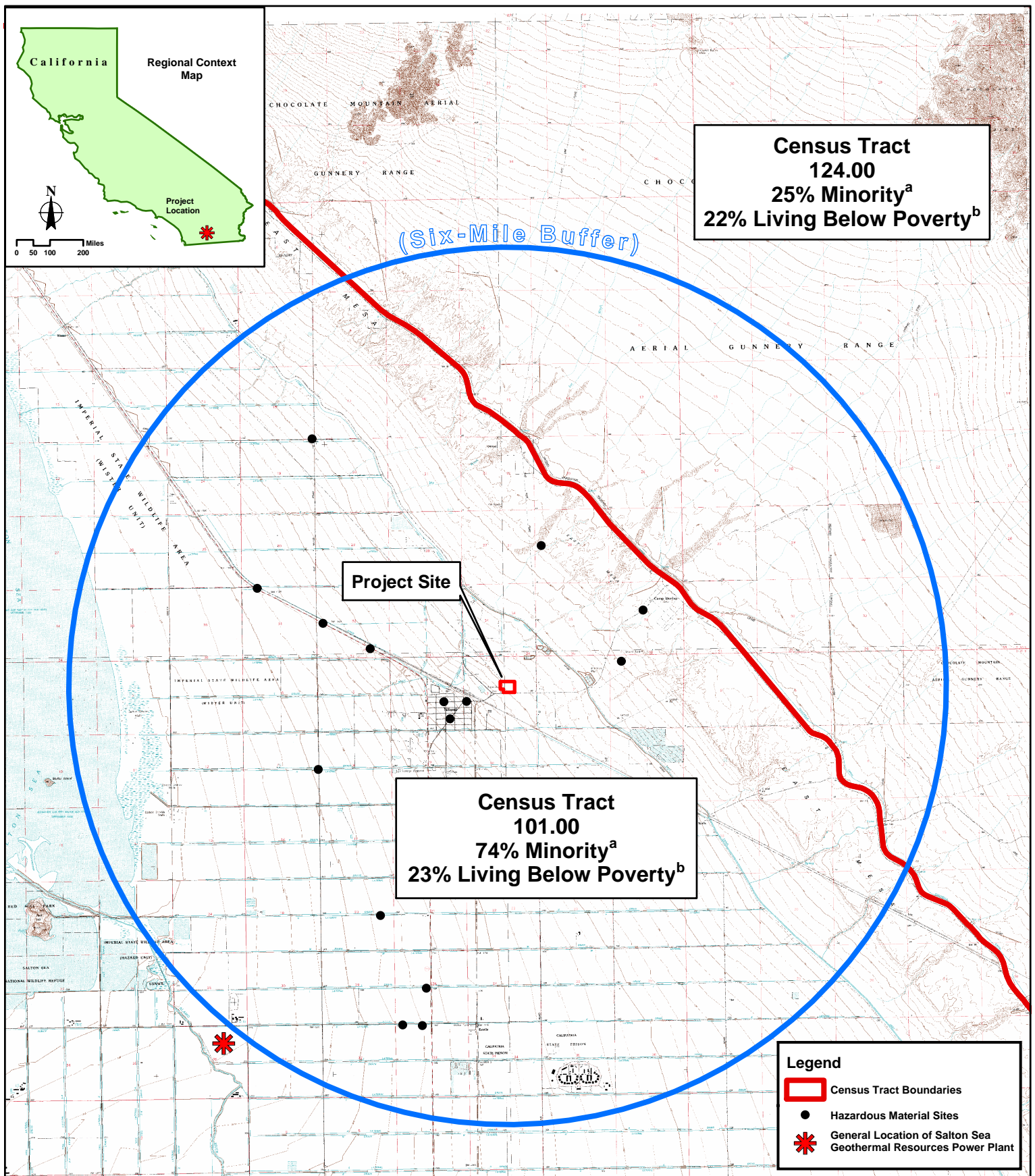
There are no permits to protect socioeconomic values, as such. See Sections 6.2, Land Use; and 6.8, Public Health and Safety, for permits relating to land use and public health and safety issues.

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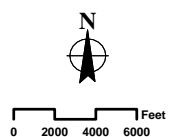
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**Notes:**

a. For the purpose of this analysis, minority races include White Hispanic, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and all other races.

b. Poverty status was determined by dividing the population living below poverty by the population for whom poverty status is determined, which excludes those living in institutional housing. In Census Tract 101, over 4,000 residents live in institutional housing (Calipatria State Prison) and therefore are not counted in the population for whom poverty status is determined (Census 2005f). The population living below poverty (1,287) as a percentage of total population (9,586) is 13 percent.



SOURCES:  
Census 2005b

**Minority Populations and Persons Living Below Poverty  
Within Six-Mile Radius of the Project**

Niland Gas Turbine Plant  
Imperial Irrigation District

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FIGURE 6.12-1

